



# Class hatred erupts

## Killing CEO highlights health care injustice

By Gregory E. Williams

Prosecutors in New York City have charged 26-year-old Luigi Mangione with the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson. Mangione was arrested in a McDonald's restaurant in Altoona, Pennsylvania. Charge include second-degree murder and illegal possession of a firearm.

Whether Mangione is the right person remains to be seen. What is undeniable is that the killing of the pig CEO has resulted in an eruption of righteous class hatred across the

country. The masses are disgusted by the obscene profits of the health insurance industry – profits that come from DENYING health care, not from providing it.

Last year, UnitedHealthcare had a net income of \$22.3 billion. Apologists in the media have been quick to point out that record profits across the industry are partly the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but that does not change the underlying dynamics of the for-profit health care system.

To that point, a recent study

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Police mug shot of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson following a 2017 arrest for DUI in Minnesota.

## From the Jena 6 to today

Ruling class imprisons youth abandoned by capitalism

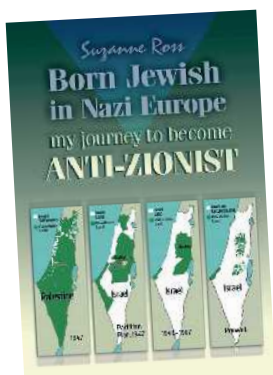
Jena legacy: How mass protest turned back white supremacists

Interview on the legacy of Jena with Larry Hales, a Black social worker who participated in the Jena 6 solidarity movement.



**The Biden crime family**

An open letter to President Joe Biden:  
**FREE LEONARD PELTIER**



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- Justice for Jordan Neely!

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# An open letter to President Joe Biden:

## FREE LEONARD PELTIER



Mr. President, If you can pardon your son, why can't you free the Indigenous political prisoner Leonard Peltier?

The 80-year-old man, a leader of the American Indian Movement, has been imprisoned for 48 years. He suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, and a heart condition.

The FBI framed Leonard Peltier in retaliation for the historic 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee. Three years of violence followed this courageous stand for Indigenous rights, with over 60 AIM members and supporters murdered. Despite a large FBI presence, nothing was done to stop these murders and even more numerous assaults.

Peltier was convicted of killing two FBI agents — Jack Coler and Ronald Williams — in a shootout on the Pine Ridge Reservation on June 26, 1975. The agents were in unmarked cars.

Leonard Peltier was asked by traditional people at Pine Ridge, who were being targeted, to protect them from violence. Peltier and a small group of young AIM members set up camp on a ranch owned by the traditional Jumping Bull family. More than 150 FBI agents, cops, and vigilantes surrounded the ranch when shooting began.

Besides the two FBI agents killed, an AIM member – Joseph Stuntz Killright – was shot and killed by a sniper's bullet. His death has never even been investigated.

Although the FBI claim that 40 Indigenous people were involved in the gunfight, only AIM members Bob Robideau,

Darrell Butler, and Leonard Peltier were brought to trial. A jury acquitted Robideau and Butler on grounds of self-defense.

Leonard Peltier was arrested in Canada on Feb. 6, 1976. The U.S. government in its extradition request, used affidavits signed by Myrtle Poor Bear who claimed she saw Leonard Peltier shoot the two FBI agents.

Ms. Poor Bear had never met Mr. Peltier and wasn't present during the shoot-out. Soon after, Ms. Poor Bear recanted her statements and said the FBI threatened and coerced her into signing the affidavits.

Leonard Peltier was brought to the United States and tried in 1977. Myrtle Poor Bear wasn't allowed to testify by the Nixon-appointed Judge Paul Benson. Not one witness identified Mr. Peltier as the shooter of the FBI agents.

More than 140,000 pages of FBI documents were withheld from the defense. A ballistic test proving that a bullet casing found near the FBI agents' bodies did not come from the gun tied to Mr. Peltier was intentionally concealed.

Because this evidence was withheld, the jury found Leonard Peltier guilty. Judge Benson sentenced Mr. Peltier to two consecutive life terms.

The Eighth Federal Appeals Circuit ruled that "there is a possibility that the jury would have acquitted Leonard Peltier had the records and data improperly withheld from the defense been available to him in order to better exploit and reinforce the inconsistencies casting strong doubts upon the government's case."

Yet, the court denied Mr. Peltier a new trial. The late Federal Judge Gerald William Heaney, who wrote the decision denying a new trial, later urged Leonard Peltier's release, stating that the FBI used improper tactics to convict him.

Among those calling for Leonard Peltier's freedom was the late South African President Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in apartheid prisons. Leonard Peltier has spent 48 years in federal prisons.

Mr. President, you recently apologized for the federal government's role in running boarding schools where thousands of Native American children endured abuse, neglect, and eradication of their tribal identities.

Follow up on your apology by freeing Leonard Peltier. #



Photo: <http://www.uaine.org/>

### Day of Mourning protest against genocide and theft of land

2024 National Day of Mourning was commemorated on November 28 at Cole's Hill, in Plymouth, Mass. United American Indians of New England have kept this annual tradition since 1970, to mourning their ancestors. As shown in the photo above it was a protest against genocide and the theft of lands here and in Palestine.

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# The Biden crime family

By Gary Wilson

The widespread reaction online following the assassination of the health insurance CEO in Midtown Manhattan highlights the deep-seated anger and resentment toward the capitalist system of health care for profit.

The health care insurance oligarchs, notorious for profiting by systematically denying medical coverage, may be the most hated of the gang of capitalist oligarchs ruling this country.

The internet is full of stories about how his company denied necessary medical care, sometimes killing a family member. The shooter is being celebrated as a folk hero by many.

Genocide Joe Biden probably knows that he's about as popular as a health industry CEO, which might explain, in part, why he gave an unconditional and complete pardon to his son Hunter.

You might ask, how's that?

So, like Donald Trump, Hunter Biden is a felon, convicted of three tax felony charges for failure to pay \$1.4 million in taxes, and, as a drug addict, he was convicted of felony possession of a firearm. It is illegal for someone who uses or is addicted to controlled substances to own or possess a firearm. He was also guilty of failing to pay child support to Lunden Roberts in Arkansas, the mother of a grandchild that Grandpa Joe refused to recognize.

Joe Biden says of Hunter, isn't that the kind of stuff almost every rich kid does, but they don't get treated as criminals. The only reason Hunter was targeted is because he's the son of Joe.

Could be, but then why didn't Joe just pardon Hunter for the tax and gun stuff and maybe throw in some pardons for others to make it look good, especially since Genocide Joe and his press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, said numerous times that he'd never, ever, cross-my-fingers no pardon for Hunter?

The sweeping pardon covers not only Hunter's tax and gun convictions but also any other "offenses against the United States which he has committed or may have committed or taken part in during the period from January 1, 2014 through December 1, 2024."

You may have noticed that none of the news reports asked what other offenses Hunter committed going back to 2014 require a pardon.

## Ukraine 2014

The Obama administration helped overthrow Ukraine's elected president in February 2014 (the Maidan coup) and installed a far-right regime loyal to Washington. At the time, Joe Biden was the Obama administration's point man on Ukraine. He visited the country more than half a dozen times from 2014 to 2016.

Beginning in 2014, Joe Biden's son Hunter served on the board of Ukraine's largest oil and gas company, Burisma. Hunter says Burisma paid him \$65,000 monthly, about \$780,000 annually. (The average total pay for S&P 500 directors was \$321,220 in 2023.)

In an ABC News interview in October 2019, Hunter was asked if he thought he would have been on the Burisma board if his name wasn't Biden. "Probably not," he said.

Burisma was under investigation by a Ukrainian prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, for corruption. NPR reported in 2018:

"At an event at the Council on Foreign Relations in 2018, Biden said that on one of his many trips to Ukraine, he told the country's leaders that they had to get rid of the prosecutor if they wanted \$1 billion in U.S. aid."

On Aug. 11, 2023, Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed U.S. Attorney David Weiss as special counsel to lead an investigation into Hunter Biden.

It turns out that Joe Biden was involved in Hunter's dealings.

In mid-December 2023, the House of Representatives voted to initiate a formal investigation into Joe's involvement in Hunter's activities. There was mounting evidence that the president participated in or benefited from Hunter's alleged criminal conduct during his father's tenure as vice president under Barack Obama and during the period before Joe Biden was elected president in 2020.

Any reports on this investigation are usually dismissed as Republican Party politics, as a majority of Republicans controlled the House. Of course, it was politics, but that doesn't mean that there

was nothing there. In fact, politics meant that, in the end, they dropped the investigation without a final finding. They'd done all they wanted to do.

The evidence included a substantial collection of email and text message archives, along with 36,000 pages of bank records and 2,000 pages highlighting the Treasury Department's "suspicious activity reports," which track unusual international bank transfers. Additionally, testimonies were provided by Hunter's business partners, federal agents, federal attorneys, and Mykola Zlochevsky, the CEO of Burisma Holdings, the largest oil and gas company in Ukraine.

The Congressional investigators found records showing that the Biden family, particularly Hunter and Joe's brother James, received over \$20 million in

payments from Ukraine's Burisma during Joe's time as vice president. They also discovered a web of more than 20 shell companies established by the Biden family to mask payments linked to Hunter's influence-peddling activities.



Hunter and Joe Biden planning another swindle?

FBI investigators also found evidence of a \$10 million payment that Joe and Hunter Biden reportedly received from Burisma.

In 2024, Russia's Investigative Committee, looking into the deadly Crocus City Hall attack on March 22, 2024, which killed 145 and injured 551 concertgoers, accused Burisma of financing terrorist activities in Russia. The accusations also alleged that senior U.S. and NATO officials were involved.

Clearly, this is a crime family. Genocide Joe, who repeatedly denied any involvement in his son's affairs, was always involved. He lied. It turns out that the pardon he gave his son may be a pardon for himself.

And there's more to come. Politico says the White House is considering giving preemptive pardons to officials who haven't even been accused or convicted of wrongdoing yet. What have they been doing the past four years that requires such extraordinary measures of clemency? #

# Justice for Jordan Neely!

## Killer of Black homeless man goes free

By Struggle-La Lucha New York bureau

Black Lives Don't Matter was the message given by a New York City court as the killer of Jordan Neely, Daniel Penny, was set free on Dec. 9. The white martial arts expert Penny knew what he was doing as he took six minutes strangling the Black homeless man Neely to death.

The killing took place within a subway car in Manhattan on May 1, 2023. Police let Penny go free. Only the anger of the people forced the District Attorney to bring charges.

Jordan Neely's father, Andre Zachery, was righteously angry at the license to kill given to Penny and every other white vigilante. Supporters of the killer had raised \$3 million for Penny's lawyers.

The December 12th Movement called two rallies on Dec. 10 to protest. "Jordan Neely was murdered because he was Black, poor and America had made him mentally ill," read the December 12th



Dec. 10, New York City – activists led by the December 12 Movement demand justice for Black homeless man Jordan Neely murdered by a racist vigilante. Charles Barron speaking

SLL photos

Movement's statement. "All these are capital crimes in this country, which upholds one God — Profit."

Reparations lawyer Roger Wareham, a member of D12's International Secretariat, denounced the killer's acquittal.

Wareham compared it to the U.S. Supreme Court's notorious pro-slavery Dred Scott ruling in 1857. That court then declared, "Black people have no rights that white men are bound to respect."

Jordan Neely — a homeless man who needed help — got no respect and was instead choked to death. As one protester's sign stated, "Jordan Neely deserved to love."

Former New York State assembly person and City Council member Charles Barron also attacked the killer's exoneration. Following the evening rally, people marched to Wall Street, whose wealth began with slavery. #

# Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

by Stephen Millies

People marched through downtown Philadelphia on Dec. 9, demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners. It was the 43rd anniversary of Mumia's arrest by Philadelphia police, who also shot him.

Cops took Mumia to the hospital the long way, hoping he would die along the way. Framed for killing officer Daniel Faulkner, the Black revolutionary has been jailed 16 years longer than Nelson Mandela. He was on death row until 2011, with prison authorities still trying to kill Mumia by denying him and other prisoners health care.

Protesters gathered at City Hall by the statue of Octavius Catto, a Black political activist and freedom fighter who was murdered in 1871. Catto's racist killer, Frank Kelly, wasn't convicted.

Neither was Daniel Penny, who spent six minutes strangling the homeless Black man Jordan Neely to death on a New York City subway car. The martial arts expert Penny was acquitted the same day people were protesting in Philadelphia.



Revolutionary journalist jailed for 43 years

Dec. 9, Philadelphia – protesters downtown call for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners.

SLL photos: Stephen Millies

Mumia Abu-Jamal has long had a target on his back. As a 15-year-old, Mumia became a member of the Black Panther Party.

The FBI started a file on the revolutionary teenager. Super racist Mayor Frank Rizzo threatened Mumia Abu-Jamal at a news conference.

Among the speakers at the City Hall rally was Teresa Shoatz, the daughter of the late Russell Maroon Shoatz, who, like Mumia, was a member of the Black Panther Party. Shoatz spent 40 years in prison.

He was only released when dying of cancer — a result of deliberate medical neglect — and died 52 days later.

People marched from City Hall to the office of Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner, demanding Mumia's freedom. Krasner, a so-called reformer, insists on keeping Mumia locked up despite boxes of "lost" evidence that prove that he was framed.

The people will free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, and all political prisoners. Free them all! #



# 'You never know when an eruption will occur'

## A veteran activist on Jena 6 and beyond

Against fascism: reclaiming the legacy of **POPULISM** for today's class struggle

*This December marks 18 years since the start of the case of the Jena 6: Robert Bailey, Mychal Bell, Carwin Jones, Bryant Purvis, Jesse Ray Beard, and Theo Shaw.*

*These six Black teenagers from the town of Jena, Louisiana, were initially charged with attempted second-degree murder of a white classmate after a series of white supremacist events at their high school. Following mass resistance, their charges were reduced to still-serious aggravated battery and conspiracy to commit aggravated battery. The movement ultimately got all charges against the six dropped to misdemeanor battery. All were free by 2009.*

*Because of the racism on display in the operations of the legal system, this case sparked one of the biggest civil rights protest movements in the U.S. since the 1960s. Activists marched in cities across the country, including 60,000 in Jena itself. Below is part one of a recent interview on the legacy of Jena with Larry Hales, a Black social worker who participated in the Jena 6 solidarity movement in Denver and other cities. We have also republished three pieces Hales wrote on the Jena 6 in 2007-08.*

**Gregory E. Williams:** Can you tell us about your political development?

**Larry Hales:** I'm a social worker working in homelessness prevention and eviction defense.

I'm from the former industrial sector of the country, smack dab in the middle – Erie, Pennsylvania, Lake Erie. As teenagers, my parents moved from the deep South, Mississippi, to get jobs in factories. When my father first worked as a janitor, he and then my mother got jobs in a factory. I'm not sure if either graduated traditional high school. My mother later got her GED. I was born in the '70s, both my brothers and I, so we grew up in the '80s. Our coming of age was after the smashing of the Black liberation movement and all liberation movements in the dark era of the Reagan administration.

I guess it's hard to put a specific time-stamp on deindustrialization because of the tendency to so-called revolutionize the means of production to speed up workers that are left and cast off the others. But in terms of when it hit, I think if you look for a time period when it was on its ascent, the late '70s and '80s is where it really just started picking up. And that, of course, was a period when Reagan smashed the Air Traffic Controllers union.

So that had a big impact on me growing up with parents working in the manufacturing sector. I didn't grow up with my mother. She left when I was young. Tried to come back a few times, but I didn't get to really know her until I was 15 – really get to know her.

They were from the Deep South, and I spent many parts of my summers there. But I grew up with family members working in factories in Erie, Pennsylvania. And my father was a UE member who supported Jesse Jackson in '84 and '88. Jesse Jackson actually spoke to the union in Erie. I can't remember if it was '84 and '88, but I remember my father speaking glowingly about that. That had a big impact on me.

And there were these twin calamities that hit in the '80s. When I was a kid, parents weren't pushing their kids to go into the factory. They were pushing their kids to take the civil service exam and become postal workers. That was the big thing. Everyone was telling their kids – Black parents, I don't know what white parents were telling their kids. I think this was because they foresaw that there weren't going to be manufacturing jobs.

At that time, people were being cast off and laid off and factories were being shuttered. This is also right around the time when the U.S. government had made use of the fact (or they allowed, depending on how you believe it happened) that certain communities were being flooded with illegal chemical substances, right? At that time, crack cocaine had hit big. And so you had people in my field who were social workers,



Protesters in Los Angeles after police officers found not guilty in the brutal beating of unarmed Black man, Rodney King. This verdict sparked the 1992 L.A. Uprising.

who were breaking up families, taking families away. And there was all this pseudoscience about crack cocaine and the people who are addicted to it, and "crack babies," for lack of a better term.

A little bit later, you had the Clinton administration. You had all these bills being passed: the personal responsibility and work authorization bill [editor's note: the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 was also called "welfare reform"]; you had the omnibus crime bill; you had both anti-terrorism bills under Clinton. These things were all happening, and it just had this effect on the Black community with a huge uptick in people being imprisoned. It was a very tough time.

But the one shining light for me was the L.A. Rebellion. That had a profound impact on me. And I had tried to get a rebellion started myself. My brother worked at Chi Chi's. And so I went in, they're like, "You do something." So I said, "We're all gonna rush in there, like you go first." I went in the back door, stole some steaks and some other stuff, and ran out. And I thought everybody was going to start rushing, and it was going to start this big thing, but nothing happened, unfortunately.

But the impact the L.A. Rebellion had on me and seeing the people who could fight like that – that impact set a pretty firm political foundation for me. And it wasn't a straight line. I got in a lot of trouble. Things happened. I grew up. I was a Black Muslim for a while; I was a Black nationalist.

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# Jena 6 and beyond

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I would say that the thing that really got me formally into politics was going to Palestine in 2002. (And I was in the military before that, from 1997-1998 but was kicked out. Really a medical discharge, a complicated thing. It's a contradiction, right?) And so, after Palestine, I didn't turn back from that point. It started the leftward trajectory. Being able to see the Palestinian struggle and be involved in it to some degree is a point at which there was no going back. Because I saw people that had very little means with which to fight but were willing to use their very bodies; they were fighting because they really had no choice. It was either fight or allow yourself to be disappeared.

And, you know, that, to me: I feel like if Palestinian people could fight with very little, and still be hopeful, and still be able to smile, still be able to enjoy one another's company – all these things that are actually part of resistance because I think the oppressor always tries to stamp that out. But that act in and of itself, being able to love and be loved and to share these quiet moments – personal, intimate moments with people – is an act of resistance. And that, along with the act of physical fighting, to me, is why I believe that it is my duty to continue to fight as much as I can until I'm no longer around anymore.

**GEW:** When you look at the L.A. Rebellion – in the longer timeframe – it's sort of an island of struggle erupting in a bleak period after the '60s and '70s. And like you said, the country went through Reaganism and deindustrialization. But moments like the L.A. Rebellion really spark something. And I think we're seeing those moments happening in quicker succession in the past 10 to 20 years.

And that's what I'm getting at in my second question:

In your writings from the period of the Jena 6 campaign, you put those events in historical perspectives up to that point, addressing the terrible history of lynching, and explaining what these events in Jena really meant. This was when some in the media, and leaders in the town, would try to brush it under the rug. "Oh, hanging nooses in trees is just a youthful prank."

This December, we're coming up on the 18th anniversary of the events that started the case of the Jena 6, which was in 2006. This was a couple of years after Katrina, a big thing for us here in Louisiana. It was several years before Occupy, and it was before the Black Lives Matter

movement that began several years later. It prefigured Charlottesville with the white supremacist march in the town and the mass fight back against that.

At the same time, there was a movement to take down symbols of white supremacy all over the country and outside of the U.S., including in the Caribbean, for example. Here in New Orleans, we had the Take 'Em Down movement to remove symbols of white supremacy. That was most active around 2015 to 2020. White supremacists from around the country gathered here to defend Confederate monuments. This is at the height of Trump's first presidency. But they were outnumbered by thousands opposing white supremacy. It got so intense that at one of the biggest marches, law enforcement had snipers posted up on top of buildings surrounding the crowd. Ultimately, many of the monuments were taken down.

Then in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, workers carried out work stoppages across the country, resisting the bosses who were endangering their lives. Millions were dying from the pandemic globally, including well over a million people in the U.S. Nurses went on strike. Sanitation workers went on strike, including here in New Orleans, where there was a strike of majority Black, non-unionized sanitation workers. Nationally, retail workers went on strike, etc.

Simultaneously, the movement around the police murder of George Floyd grew to gigantic proportions. That was probably the biggest mass uprising of the period. Millions were in the street. And our editorial view in Struggle-La Lucha is that it was really this mobilization of the people that kept Trump in check, not the Democrats. It wasn't all the legalistic stuff, but the people in the streets, the solidarity.

And now we have the Palestinian struggle, which has been a mass movement. And that's one of the biggest flashpoints since the 2020 George Floyd summer. That's just a summation of points in the struggle leading us to where we are now. Feel free to bring up anything that I missed or that you want to talk about. There's a lot we could get into with the labor movement: the 2018-19 Red for Ed teachers' strikes, the campaigns to unionize Amazon and Starbucks, the historic auto strikes of 2023.

But just thinking about this span of time and the people's struggles, what do you see as the significance of the Jena 6? How does that fit into this narrative of recent history?

**LH:** I would say that the Jena 6 marked a resurgence of the Black struggle in a lot of ways. Not that it had ever gone away, but I think that it was a start of this new struggle against the repressive state.

My generation, what they call Generation X, at the time when it was young, was probably called the most progressive generation yet. But if you look at people who made up that generation now — obviously there's been two or three generations since then — but the people who I grew up with who were thought to be progressive aren't so much now, necessarily. I think people are like that, you know, because they're dialectical. People are shaped; their ideas are shaped and molded and changing, sometimes contradictory and go back and forth. But I think that if it wasn't for the Jena 6, I can imagine that if it wasn't for that uprising, that struggle, Barack Obama wouldn't have been elected in 2008. I think that he was elected on the back of that uprising. Some people may disagree.

I think that the ruling class at a certain point realized what they needed in terms of the masses of people being excited about that. It came at the right point in history, I guess. And I think in terms of what it meant as far as white supremacy and the growth of white supremacy, I feel like if we go back to 2008, Black people were excited. There were a lot of people who were excited. I think it was one of the elections in this country that had the most participation of people who were of age to be able to participate in the election, if not the most.

But it had a very brief honeymoon, right? It lasted right up until Henry Louis Gates was arrested. And Henry Louis Gates is not progressive by any means in the Black context. He can be counter-reactionary. He's one of those middle-of-the-road academics. But that experience and Barack Obama's response to that, it seems in a lot of ways, led to a lot of liberal white people to basically turn their backs on him (especially middle-class moderate to liberal white people).

And I think that they initially supported him because politically he was actually a moderate anyway. He was more of a Reagan Democrat, as they say. But he also symbolized the hopes and dreams of Black people who never dreamed that they would live to see a Black person hold that position. But right around that time is where we saw the growth of the Tea

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# Jena 6 and beyond

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Party movement and the development of this new, more vocal, white supremacist, fascist base that has grown louder and also younger. That has grown in numbers since then, especially under Trump.

And it's something that is a reaction to the growth of neoliberalism and this global competition that opened up, especially with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and more workers able to be exploited by capital, being offshored and shipped out. And so in that destruction and ruin of working-class jobs – good paying jobs with unions and benefits – you got this trend towards reaction, not just in the U.S., but in the whole Western metropole world, the European countries. So you had this growing, which has gotten even bigger, and you have this new reaction to the repressive state growing from the Jena 6. And with George Floyd 14 years later – and not just George Floyd, but with Michael Brown, and all the other instances of police brutality that sparked these mass movements – that may have happened, but I think the Jena 6 and the uprising that happened with the Jena 6 laid the groundwork for this type of response.

I feel that it's not just that there are Black people, and oppressed people, and white folks as well, who are progressive to revolutionary. It's like these two poles have erupted in U.S. society, one reactionary and the other progressive. And I think that going forward, especially with people who are participating in the Palestinian movement, we have to begin to not just engage (revolutionaries have already been engaging), but we have to find a way to communicate the growth of these phenomena to one another and build some type of cohesive movement amongst the so-called revolutionary left, but also be able to engage with these movements. Because it seems as if a lot of times there's this eruption and it doesn't completely go away. And then people get tired because they don't see victories. But we have to use opportunities, things growing and developing to learn from the people involved, but also develop the political consciousness of the people involved. Somewhere in there, I think, is my answer to your question.

**GEW:** I think it's in there for sure. Thank you. You've given a very good global answer, like putting it in a global perspective. In terms of capital, even – what's happening with the capitalist system.

So, how did you become involved in Jena 6 solidarity? And what movement activities did you engage in?

**LH:** I found it like a lot of other people. I think it was Michael Baisden's radio show that really broke the news. Then Jasiri X made a hip-hop song about it and a video, if I'm remembering the order of things correctly. That helped spread it. That's where a lot of people found out. And so we had a number of solidarity actions in New York. I wasn't able to go to Louisiana, and I can't remember exactly why that happened, but I was still living in Denver at that time. I didn't move to New York until a little bit later, but we had actions in Denver, of course.

Denver has an interesting history with the Black community and other oppressed communities as well. So I participated in a lot of actions, and I wrote a lot about it and I talked a lot about it and what it meant – the significance of it to the history of the Black struggle, but also the struggle against the repressive state. And I think that some of the victories that we have had in terms of mass incarceration owe to that period in history, that start.

In terms of what it meant to me, well, sometimes even when you're involved in a political struggle, you get sort of demoralized and upset. And then these things like the Jena 6 movement happen – seemingly from out of nowhere – and it makes you believe in the possibilities of people. And you never really know when an eruption is going to occur, but you should always, to some extent, be ready for it to occur. And that was one of those things that was a big shot in the arm, I think, not just to me, but to a lot of people, to say that, yes, we can, in a moment's notice, rise up. And we are very much still aware, just as the rest of society is, of social relations as Black people in this society.

**Lallan Schoenstein:** Larry, when you were in Denver, I remember you were very involved in the struggle against police brutality, and you were coming under a lot of personal threats. And while you were living in Denver, we were really scared for you.

**LH:** Yeah, I had my home raided, I think the same year my mother died. It was Nov. 30, 2007. I remember because I was watching the Lakers in Milwaukee. And there was a gentleman by the name of Joe Teague who had been shot by the police, by a parole officer, because parole officers in Denver, like a lot of major cities, carry guns and they have badges. And he had been shot three times, and he

had violated and was sent back to prison. And I was his lifeline on the outside. I was in contact with his mother, and then he paroled out and rolled to my house.

And then one night, it must have been almost 11:00 p.m., 10-12 police officers and parole officers showed up at the door doing the cop knock, which is not a knock, but like just pounding like they're breaking the door down. That ultimately led to me being arrested and jailed.

And there was also a girl, Cassidy, who had her collarbone fractured by a cop who was moonlighting in a parking lot with King Soopers [supermarket], which was part of a mini-mall. We had organized a campaign, and we had boycotted that King Soopers because two security guards who worked there helped that cop. And we basically said, "If they don't respect our community, then we shouldn't shop there." And it was successful. It was so successful that they had a couple of so-called leaders hold press conferences announcing that the boycott was over. These were people who weren't part of it. They took advantage of a woman who was, unfortunately, very mentally ill, and they had her coming around to the rallies saying that I worked for the police. They tried to snitch-jacket me. So they used a number of tactics to try and quiet that movement.

But it was a very tense time. It was definitely a tense time, especially when they raided the apartment. They threw me around the apartment and ripped out my hair, punched me in the stomach and threatened me. And at one point they drove me around the back, behind the apartment building, and I just thought ... You didn't know what was gonna happen. I didn't know what was gonna happen. I was like, "This is it." And he's arguing with me, and I'm arguing with him, and I'm like, "Listen, you're gonna do what you're gonna do anyway." So he's like, "Be quiet." I was like, "No, you're gonna do what you're gonna do, but you're not gonna have my dignity. You ain't gonna get me to shut up." My mouth could have got me in a lot of trouble, but I was gonna be in trouble anyway, so I might as well use the one weapon I had, which was to tell them how I felt.

**GEW:** They used so many tactics of repression against people in the struggle, especially Black people, and we saw that recurring throughout the Black Lives Matter movement in different cities.

**LH:** A common theme for sure. Yeah, absolutely. #

# From Jena 6 to Wisconsin State Capitol

*Below is part two of a recent interview on the legacy of Jena with Larry Hales, a Black social worker who participated in the Jena 6 solidarity movement in Denver and other cities. We have also republished three pieces Hales wrote on the Jena 6 in 2007-08.*

**Gregory E. Williams:** From my perspective as a white organizer, we try to support movements of racially oppressed people, or nationally oppressed people, to use the Marxist term. In my experience, it can often seem easier for us to just go and participate in the marches, which we need to do. (Getting in the streets is the only way we're going to survive the fascist steamroller that's coming – or is actually already here.) But marching, etc., can sometimes seem less daunting than just trying to have a conversation with a strange white person and talk to them about racism, or even class. And I'm from rural Louisiana. Or even talking to co-workers and family.

One time, I was handing out flyers at a bus stop in New Orleans with a longtime Black organizer in the city – a Black communist. And he said, “are you afraid to talk to white people? Scared they're going to be racist and say some backwards shit?” And I was like, “you know, I guess I am.” And he's like, “I'm not afraid to talk to them. Like, what do you think is going to happen?” Now, I'm not talking about trying to infiltrate the Klan! By all means, be safe. Every situation is different, but we were in a group passing out flyers at a bus stop.

I raise this just because, as white activists, we often don't actually do that work of trying to reach other white workers who are prey to MAGA and all this kind of crap. Racism runs deep, and people are subjected to racist lies continually, inundated 24/7 with corporate news and often total disinformation on social media. That's all most people ever hear.

But at the same time, people are transformed by struggle, and it can happen fast. Did you notice any changes, say, in white people – white working-class people, especially – being won over in the course of struggles like the Jena 6 movement?

**Larry Hales:** One of the biggest moments I've seen in relatively recent history was the seizure of the state capitol in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2011. Wisconsin has a very interesting history, but there were a lot of reactionary bills coming down.

We can follow the trend back to the '90s, for example, with the Bradley Foundation. [editor's note: a right-wing Milwaukee-based non-profit that undermines public schools by supporting “school choice,” just like the ultra-rich Walmart heirs]. I mean, in those days, the amount of money that the Bradley Foundation was putting into political campaigns pales in comparison to what happens now. But at that time, they had W-2, or Wisconsin Works, which was sort of a testing for what became the Personal Responsibility for a Work Opportunity Act. [editor's note: the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 was also called “welfare reform”] The Bradley Foundation put a lot of money into the Clinton campaign, even though that act was actually written by Newt Gingrich and his movement.

Newt Gingrich wrote that bill with some of his cronies. But it was very much trumpeted and supported by Bill Clinton. The Clinton administration represented – even though it had been happening over history – but they represented that big shift politically for the Democratic Party on a national level. And so not only that but the whole privatization movement of public schooling. There were a lot of pilot programs in Wisconsin, and the whole myth of the welfare queen and the utilization of that. There were a lot of bad things happening in the corridor to Wisconsin, the Racine, Milwaukee area, which is where the Black population is concentrated. And that represents the beginning of the attack on not just the social safety net, but public monies and public benefits.

And when Act 10 was happening after Governor Scott Walker's election, it was like the white people outside of the corridor area (and even in that area) who had supported these policies realized ... I don't know if anyone ever said it, but I feel like this became something that was focused on one population, even though the majority of people who benefit from welfare are not Black, they're white – white women in particular. But there's that idea that these people on welfare are generally Black. They think, “this is something that Black people are taking advantage of, they're taking your public money, they're taking your tax money, yada, yada, yada.”

*[editor's note: the 2011 Wisconsin Act 10 is a bill designed to systematically strip public-sector workers of their rights while cutting pay and benefits. This is the bill that sparked the movement in Wisconsin.]*

But when they rose up, I think that those differences, those beliefs began to sort of melt away. Based on what I understand, the conversations that happened – people began to see this as a public attack. It may have started with one population of people, but it was part of this trend. And I think that what it sparked in people, like it woke up our collective imagination of what was possible, even though they ultimately lost. But not only just what's possible but what's necessary. Like, they seized public property and they held it for three weeks or more. And like the whole world just – people from Egypt were paying for pizza orders for the people inside the state capitol.

**Lallan Schoenstein:** It was magnificent.

**LH:** Yes, and I think that is one of those moments where people began to see the common cause of the struggle. And there have been others, but the most dynamic one I've seen is that seizure of the state capitol. And I believe that inspiration has to be taken from that. Because – even if we don't say it outright, when we see these moments, these things like the uprising of the Jena 6 – it gives inspiration for what could transpire later. And there have been some great moments. It's almost as if we only think about the losses that we've had. We've had a lot of tremendous losses. There's a lot to be sad about, but there's a lot to be energized about that happened in a very short period of time, too. And I think it was between the uprising in Jena to the takeover of the Madison State Capitol. [editor's note: Activists occupied the Madison State Capitol between February and June 2011].

**GEW:** So it was a little before Occupy [which started around September 2011].

**LH:** Yeah, it was during a time of the budgeting crises in all the major cities, right? It was the end of the Great Recession, but when things were still kind of picking up, and then I think there were all the budgeting crises. But yeah, that was one of the big moments for me that showed that white people – the white working class – were waking up in their potential to understand the history of the events that unfolded.

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# occupation: Struggle transforms people

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**GEW:** I'm really glad you brought that up because I left Wisconsin out of my little summation. But that was really a pivotal moment. And maybe you could even say the Tea Party – starting with the Tea Party and then Trumpism – that's kind of like the shadow side of that. It's like, what happens when consciousness is thwarted. It's like people going back to sleep – especially white people going back to sleep. And it's not just MAGA. The Democrats have played a role in drawing people away from the struggle.

**LS:** It's also the AFL leadership of the labor movement and their role. The leadership's very racist. I'm talking about the top echelons who are playing golf with the Supreme Court. The labor movement really has to come from the rank and file. The Million Worker March on Washington in 2004 is an example of the Black labor movement rising up from the rank and file. We have to mobilize in our own name and try to build something outside of the leadership's collaboration with the Democratic Party.

I mean, I worked for Unite Here!, and I saw firsthand how the State Department plays a role directly in the top leadership of the unions and keeps things under control.

It's sort of like the way we used to analyze the Soviet Union.

**GE:** Right. We support the unions just like our tendency always supported the Soviet Union because the Soviet Union remained a workers' state. It was a vehicle for workers' power just like the unions are, even if the leadership distorts that vehicle of people's power. Like I said, we support the unions, but it's the political consciousness, the organization of the rank and file that's the decisive factor. Having good, fighting leadership is a big advantage, though.

**LS:** Yes. And the leadership of the labor movement is standing on the backs of the workers. They wouldn't exist if it wasn't for the workers. But on the other hand, if they can keep the workers passive, they can just do all their collaboration shit.

What happened in Wisconsin had so much potential. It had enormous potential. I mean, I think that the broader progressive movement actually could have gotten more behind it. The left should have been more engaged. And I think



Against fascism: reclaiming the legacy of **POPULISM** for today's class struggle

In response to a capitalist assault on workers' rights, activists occupied the Wisconsin State Capitol for several months in 2011.

that that potential, and what Gregory was talking about during the pandemic – all those strikes, there were thousands of strikes. Every little borough in the country had strikes for protective gear for dangerous working conditions. I mean, people were using the opportunity. It was giving them something to hold onto to fight back. I think that the labor movement has potential. Wisconsin really showed that. And movement coming from the rank and file, and that rank and file supporting the struggle for Black liberation; and support for all oppressed peoples, for gay and lesbian and trans liberation, for just the unity, fighting for unity, you know, and against this onslaught from the ruling class.

**LH:** I was reading Message to the Workers of Louisiana by Sam Marcy. And I remember David Duke's campaign. [editor's note: KKK leader David Duke ran for governor in Louisiana in 1991 and lost to Edwin Edwards.] I was 15, somewhere around there. But I remember that campaign. I obviously didn't know about Sam Marcy. I knew about communism. It was sort of like the monster underneath your bed that they talked about in school. It was like a bad thing, but I didn't know that there was a communist movement in the United States. I mean, leadership. I do remember the Erie Daily News running an interview with communist organizers in the '90s. And I do remember being like, "Huh, where are these people? They seem interesting to me."

But I've always felt that there is a way to reach people. I've always been willing to accept some backwardness because I generally think that the working class has backwardness. And what it is just kind of depends, but it's there, and it can't help but be there. I'm not surprised. Even in revolutionaries, there's some

backwardness. We have to combat it. But I think that even with some people who vote for Trump, I think he won – not a large percentage – but he did win over percentages of Black and Latino voters, for different reasons, completely. Some of it having to do with how race is viewed in this period in history, just complicated stuff – nationality, things like that.

But it goes back to that question of neoliberalism and the missteps and mistakes that the liberal party has made with people. We have been told for so long that they represent our interests, yet we haven't seen them deliver anything, so some people say, "This is what I'm doing with my vote." And I can deal with that. I can talk to someone like that. I enjoy talking to someone like that because often, people's commitment to some of these backward things is not strong. Sometimes it is. And even if it's strong, I've always found that when I talk to people, it's not like I'm hitting them over the head with stuff. It's sort of like, "Okay, that's an interesting take, but what about this?"

And, you know, some people react to the elitism of the liberal party and then totally miss the irony of the richest person in history, Elon Musk, being on stage with Trump and part of a movement, and Trump's supposed to be non-elitist. But this sort of contradiction is typical of fascist demagoguery.

But there's a way to talk to all people. And I think that we have to be willing to engage and talk to people. We have to be able to go to these places, people, and converse with them, and converse with them in a way that they feel respected. I might not respect everything that you believe, but I respect you, and I'm willing to listen to how you got there.

And we can talk about that. Because

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## Jena 6 to Wisconsin State Capitol occupation

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often people got there because of the ravages of capitalism. They just don't see the left as an option. They don't know that it exists. And they feel that the liberal party personifies that elitism, that disdain for working-class people. And so we just have to be willing to deal with that. And I think that opportunities open up when there is something like Madison, Wisconsin. But we have to be able to do it even when something like Madison, Wisconsin, does not exist. And it can be hard. It can be sad. But it's something that must be done.

**GEW:** You can hear the elitism when liberals talk about Trump, and they call him a populist, and they use the word populist like it's a dirty word. And part of this book that I'm putting together – and what this interview is partly for – is about this history of populism and dispelling the myth that there is a right-wing populism. No, that's fascism. Historically, populism was a progressive left-wing movement with its own contradictions and everything.

But they use it as this dirty word, basically meaning the masses – the unwashed, the uneducated masses. That's how it comes across from liberals. And it seeps into the left movement as well. And we can all fall into that trap of talking that way when we're in this really polarized political environment (really fake polarized because the two options are the Republicans and the Democrats). But like you said, most people in this country have never encountered the left at all. Just like you, I never met a communist when I was growing up, so we have to boldly put communist politics out there, and I believe we can do it without alienating people.

We can talk to anybody on their level. And that doesn't mean trailing behind the reactionary ideas and going along with it at all. We combat that. It's like an inoculation. The people need to be inoculated against right-wing lies. When we

go out and talk to people, we know that they're hearing lies about immigrants, and "welfare queens," and trans women, and that kind of thing. We know that they're hearing that and even people in oppressed communities are gonna repeat backwards crap that's being shoved down their throats 24 hours a day. And we have to be prepared for that and be able to bring people over to the revolutionary struggle. That's a tough thing, but it's gotta be done.

**LS:** It just makes me think of, like, talking to white workers who in their personal lives could be completely diverse, and even their families could be completely diverse. And they love their families, and they love their co-workers. They love their friends who could be Black or Latin American or whatever. And then they'll stand there and say something that they get from the media that is just confoundingly racist. They'll parrot something. It's so frustrating. You want to say, "Get in touch with reality, please. You're talking about the people you love, you know." I'm sure you all have that experience. It's unbelievable. It's like this disconnect from their personal lives to what they think they're supposed to think. What they're taught by the media – the constant, constant racism in the media just droning every day.

**LH:** People have a tendency – I was telling one of my coworkers, I said, "You know, when you're driving in traffic, and that person in front of you is driving slow, it feels like they're doing that to you."

**GEW:** But they don't even know you're back there.

**LH:** They're just going about their lives. And people think, like, immigrants are doing something to them. They're coming here, they're taking something from me. And it's like, "Okay, what are you really upset about, though? Are you really upset about people who are basically trying to live?" Like this person who's

driving slow, they're on a road trying to get somewhere just like you. Immigrant workers are trying to get somewhere to do the exact same things that you do, that you're trying to do.

I mean, it can be a lot to wrap your mind around. It can be a lot, like the town, Springfield, Ohio. And yes, no matter where you are in the world, when there's a large influx of people to that country, it can be a lot for people to understand and grapple with, and they get anxious, and they're like, "What's going on? And how is this going to impact me?"

Understandable. I can deal with people having those sorts of anxieties, right? And I think that that's where it starts. I can see, okay, it's a lot. But what are you upset with? What's really happening here?

The ways in which people get to the Metropole [imperialist countries like the U.S.], they risk their lives because they don't feel that there's any other choice. It's what President Aristide said: Haitian people are given two options, a quick death or a slow death of starvation. And that slow death of starvation is agonizing because it's not only starving yourself. You're watching your family starve to death. People are willing to risk their lives and risk having a quick death, because maybe I die, but maybe I don't, and then I'm able to save myself and my family from that slow, agonizing death.

So what are we really upset about here? If there is a lack of housing, it's not because immigrants are here; it's because of this system. That's why there's no housing. Immigrants didn't create this system. They're responding to it just like you are. So what are we really upset about here? To my co-worker, I was like, we're not really upset at that person driving in front of us who isn't moving as fast as we want them to move. We're upset because we have so little time to do things because we work until we drop dead. That's what we're upset about. #

### CLEOPHAS WILLIAMS:

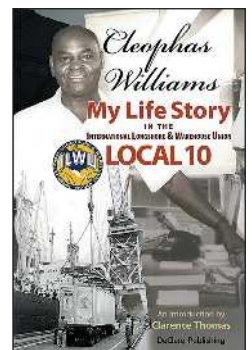
#### My Life Story in ILWU Local 10

The history of African Americans in the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) in San Francisco is indeed worthy of documentation. Cleophas Williams, distinguished career as a member of ILWU Local 10, spanned 38 years. Williams' election as president of ILWU Local 10 in 1967, made him the highest-elected African American to serve as an officer in the entire ILWU.

Born in rural Camden, Arkansas, and part of the Great Migration to the Bay Area, he arrived in Oakland, Calif., in 1942 – seeking to escape the horrors of systemic racism and white supremacy.

Williams' was amongst the leaders who placed Local 10 into the vanguard of the labor movement y engaging in civil-rights unionism and other social movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

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# From the Jena 6 to today: Ruling class imprisons youth abandoned by capitalism

Against fascism: reclaiming  
the legacy of **POPULISM**  
for today's class struggle

*Below is part three of a recent interview on the legacy of Jena with Larry Hales. We have also republished three pieces Hales wrote on the Jena 6 in 2007-08.*

## Fake crime epidemic and the criminalization of youth

**Gregory E. Williams:** I want to touch on some of the current situations here in Louisiana. I'd like to get your thoughts on it. It mirrors what's happening in the country more broadly in terms of these intensified attacks and the far right in power.

Until the beginning of the year, Louisiana had the only Democratic governor in the Deep South, John Bel Edwards. And he's probably to the right of Biden. He'd been governor twice so couldn't run again. But the Democratic Party here ran a Black candidate, Shawn Wilson, who they did not promote at all. I've never seen an election like it. There was nothing. There was no campaign. And the far right Attorney General Jeff Landry won in a landslide. But this was only a landslide among those who voted, and very few people voted. There's no popular energy around him and he's a MAGA clone. He's like Governor DeSantis in demonizing LGBTQ+ people.

His main shtick is being "tough on crime" and all this racist language. It's not even really a dog whistle. A dog whistle is something subtle. This isn't subtle. This crime hysteria is so racist, trying to make people afraid of Black youth, basically. And one of the first things he did when he came to power in February 2023 was to ram through a special session on crime in the legislature. And there's a Republican supermajority in the legislature, and they just rampaged and they rolled back every little reform that had happened.

Like I said, we had a very conservative Democratic governor before, but there was some criminal justice reform coming out of the Black Lives Matter period. I'd say that's the reason it happened. It was because of the struggle. So there was some reform, like they were no longer trying 17-year-olds as adults. And Landry's special legislative session reversed everything. They've basically

Plaquemine, Louisiana, demonstrators gathered outside the Plaquemine, Louisiana City Hall on June 2022, to protest harsh juvenile justice policies announced by the city



Photo: Michael Isaac Stein / The Lens

gotten rid of parole. They've approved executing people with nitrogen hypoxia – just horrendous things. And so there's been a big uptick in juvenile arrests.

Some investigative journalism has come out on this. (Richard A. Webster, Verite News) They're not arresting juveniles for violent crimes because, first of all, there is no juvenile violent crime epidemic. There's some violence but there's no epidemic. So what's happening is that they're arresting masses of teenagers for petty things. And now that the 17-year-olds are being tried as adults again, that stays on their record. Even if they're not convicted of anything, that arrest is on their record, and it's gonna prevent them from getting housing, potentially. It's a barrier when they're applying for jobs, for school, and other things. And they're putting tens of millions of dollars into expanding juvenile incarceration facilities across the state. (Julie O'Donoghue, Louisiana Illuminator and Verite News)

And that's just part of it. I'm thinking about this in terms of the legacy of the Jena 6. And all of this is sort of happening now, and there's really no movement. It's at a low point. There's been a Palestine Solidarity movement, which is good. There is some progressive organizing, but people aren't really in the streets resisting Landry. There's no pushback to speak of, so they're steamrolling everything. And also, his next legislative session is about to start, another special

session, which is all about cutting taxes. Well, he wants to cut income tax and corporate tax to help the rich. But he wants to increase the sales tax. That tax burden would be hardest on the working class because it hits everyday purchases. So now he's going to do what he's really in that job to do, which is to help out his millionaire and billionaire friends. [editor's note: these reforms passed]

And he's done it by stepping on oppressed people. He's like climbing over bodies to the top to be able to make it rich. I mean, he's already a millionaire himself through his investments in fossil fuels and this kind of thing. (Hard to trust somebody on the environment when he's making millions from the companies destroying the state.) It's all a huge giveaway to the rich in the midst of intensified attacks on workers. I'm just thinking about the effects, particularly on Black youth. And I'm thinking about this in terms of that history we've been talking about, the Jena 6 to today. I can't dictate what's going to happen, but as a movement, we need to think through this. What are the next steps?

**Larry Hales:** That whole idea that there's an uptick in crime – I live in New Jersey, but even in New York there's not an uptick in crime. Maybe the seeming randomness of things. And there are things that can be shocking to people, but things like this always happen to

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## Youth abandoned by capitalism

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some degree. The only difference is information travels faster. There's always somebody there to record. There's so many cameras. You imagine these things that happen, and then you look at the 11 o'clock news, and then we have this photo of this individual, and they can track that person for 10 blocks. We didn't see this happen, but we see this person walking away, and here he is walking to his door. So I think that's one of the things.

But I feel like whenever things like this happen, they get this infusion of money. It's for the developers of the prison industry. It's for every step that's involved in building something that massive and those who are going to profit from it. But, in terms of people, we had something similar when I lived in Denver, and they were building a new "justice system." It had to actually be voted on. And, you know, they want it. And the way they want it is that they were taking people to see the old county jail and city jail. And the conditions were horrible. I've been in the city jail; it was horrible. You had four people per cell, you had two bunks, and two people sleeping on the floor. I've been one of those people on the floor. But I asked the question, "Why are all these people here? Why do they have to be here?"

We had already been fighting this group that called themselves the Molly Brown Coalition and the Guardian Angels. We've been fighting them because they've been posting pictures of people who they say are drug users or drug dealers and putting them on lampposts all around the city.

We used to go and bust up their meetings. If you advertise a meeting publicly it means it's a public meeting and you can record it. The struggle that we raise is that the city has had an uptick in people being arrested for nonviolent drug crimes. And there needs to be drug treatment for users.

And even when there were violent crimes, well, where are these crimes coming from? At the same time that you're doing this, you're closing down schools in Northeast Denver and turning them into charter schools. You're closing down parks for children and opening dog runs. It's not that Black folks in these communities don't have dogs, but there are more children than there are dogs here. So why are you closing down children's parks? Why are you closing down schools? And then you're opening

up the schools for lotteries, which means anybody from around the city can apply to be in that school. And it's no longer a neighborhood school.

We can talk about the issues of segregation, but when schooling is based on neighborhood schools and you close down those neighborhood schools, children are shipped to another neighborhood and have to take the bus to get there, and their parents have to plan for that. It disrupts everything for everyone. So we raised the people's platform based on the people's needs.

You're projecting that this many people are going to get arrested, based off what? Based off the inability to provide for people's very basic needs. You're telling me there aren't other community-based alternatives to incarceration? That \$100 million that you're spending on that can go towards other things.

I read this thing that one of the people said: imagine you're in your home, and your wife and your kid (they always say your wife and your kid) are by themselves in this house, and a 17-year-old breaks in and puts a gun to their heads. This was in one of the articles you sent me about the current spike in juvenile arrests in Louisiana. They create this fear, like this is going to happen to you, therefore we need to rein in these wild teenagers.

It's hard to start a struggle when there is no struggle, but often people are resigned to, like, what can we do? What can we do about this? And I think it often starts with, hey, this is happening, what do you think about it? Would you be interested in coming to a community meeting about this, talk about this, and what alternatives there can be? And sometimes, you know, that can start something big. But yeah, I think it's happening in a lot of places. There's this uptick, even though crime is down, they're still building a bunch of prisons.

I think there's always a way to get to people. Did you ever read Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"?

**GEW:** I've only read excerpts.

**LH:** That's the best way to consume it. I find that with a lot of academic stuff, there's a lot of word salad. It's an important theoretical piece on the point at which struggle, education and learning come together but sometimes you get the primary point out of things and that's what is most important not that you got through the entire book. And I think

that's what excerpts do. But that whole idea of joining with and building that dialogue with people and starting from that point. Because I find that often, when it comes to things like this, these types of policy changes and stuff like that, they're the least likely to arouse people's anger and get a movement going.

**GEW:** Right. Especially until there's a face that they can put on something. You can point to what's happening systemically with the policy. Okay, we know that more youth are being arrested, but sometimes when somebody gets killed – and you can't predict why that particular death moves people so profoundly. It's so horrible that it has to come to that sometimes, but it catches hold and all the anger comes out at one time. There's a deceptive surface quietude in this society. But like we've been talking about throughout the interview, that can be dispelled in a moment and a whole new sequence of struggle unfolds.

**Lallan Schoenstein:** I don't know if this is true, but I used to think that when violent crimes occur, very often it's within families when there's just too much despair and helplessness. And it's not like somebody going out and attacking somebody they don't know. It's like anger and despair within a family, which is when they're just pressed too hard, where things are too bad. So, I think the whole thing about violent crime is a myth.

But I was also wondering just about the question of opportunities for, say, teenagers – even just having a job, educational opportunities. I mean, what do they see as a possibility for the future? And when Landry vilifies and attacks them, it is a cynical thing of like, "Well, this is a way to deal with them because we don't have jobs. We're not going to give them any educational opportunities." This whole generation of kids coming up has all kinds of potential, maybe even revolutionary potential. So from the ruling class point of view, jailing them is a way to deal with them. It's just cynical, but I think that that's how they think.

**LH:** It is. And I think that especially non-white, oppressed youth who have less chances aren't given the benefit of the doubt of being a young person. I don't want to conflate one locality with another and why things happen the way they do, but I think we can generalize. When a white young person commits a crime, the

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system will just look at them differently. And it will just be like, “This was a bad thing.” Like the kid who was inebriated and killed a family of four. I don’t want people going to prison for substance addiction or substance use. But history tells me that if that were a Black youth who did that there would not be a plea deal worked out to avoid prison. And no one in the mainstream media would have looked at them sympathetically and just been like, “Oh, well, this was a mistake. He’s going to remember that for the rest of his life.” And I feel like this is a prison in and of itself. They would be shouting for that person’s head.

And so I think that when people visualize crime in the U.S., it’s a certain person committing those crimes. They visualize certain types of crimes and a certain person committing those crimes. And they may not even be conscious of the fact that they’re doing that necessarily, right? Sort of an unconscious thing. If someone were to say, 20 minutes ago, someone got shot in some part of town, an image is gonna pop in people’s minds, right? And then not only that image, a whole history of this person is going to pop in their mind. And the reasons why this person should be handled this way versus another way. And if it turns out that it’s not who they thought it was, then what they think should happen begins to shift and change if that person looks different. It’s not all the time, but frequently enough.

And we’re just sort of conditioned that way. For instance, we’re used to thinking that if someone said that we found this new serial killer, the first thing that pops into my mind is a white guy, a middle-aged white guy. So I think when it comes to youth crime, when they’re building youth facilities, they’re thinking of a certain kind of youth in prison.

**LS:** And with these mass killings, immediately you think of a young white person who’s coming from a very right-wing, fascist family where they’ve been brutalized – maybe military.

**LH:** I stereotype that right away, but it’s so often the case.

**GEW:** And I think this is very conscious on the part of the pundits and the politicians who’re stoking this stuff. I think it’s very conscious for them. When we talk about somebody like Landry, he knows exactly what he’s doing. And he knows that when he says crime – and

when he says youth crime – he’s talking about Black kids. And his super racist base is eating that up. Like I said, they’re not the majority because very few people actually came out to vote for him. But they’re eating that up. And then other people who aren’t diehard racists still have that conditioning, like you said, because we’ve all grown up with that.

**LS:** Here in New York City, almost every single night, there’s a police blotter report, and it reports some crime that happened in the city. And they have camera footage. And you really cannot see individual features of the person. All you can see is it’s a Black person – it’s a Black man – and everybody is supposed to look for this Black man. They ask everybody to look for him. They do it every single night. You can count on it.

**LH:** Yep, every night, here it comes!

You know, I worked with the homeless population, and my kids asked me – I love talking to my kids, we have the greatest conversations – but they asked me, “Daddy, do you help people?” And I said, “No, not enough at least.” And they’re like, “Why? Isn’t that what your job is?” And I said, well, it’s an organization that has limited funds. And often it becomes this chase for funds. And so they’re always concerned with data. Data has to say this because we need these funds. And then the whole idea of helping people gets lost in the shuffle. It’s about the funds. And I get it, you have an organization, you have payroll, infrastructure, and you gotta pay for these things. But the organization with limited funds becomes the answer to what should be addressed societally, I said.

And we worked with people who oftentimes were mentally ill and chemically addicted, and these things have happened. Yes, there’s a part of mental illness that is genetic, where people are genetically predisposed, but it’s the interaction of environment and genetics, often. I was like, so what we are seeing is people’s response to trauma and hardship, and intergenerational trauma. That’s what we’re seeing, I said. This society created these conditions that people are responding to and it’s not going to be a quick fix. It’s not going to be a fix that will happen in this person’s lifetime, unfortunately. I wish it would. But knowing that to be the case, there’s ways for society to deal with it. And so one of the things people are talking about is this in-

crease in crime. But what are you really upset with here? The city doesn’t even have enough psychiatric beds.

**LS:** I remember in the ‘80s they closed whole wings of hospitals where there were people who were just on the edge of being able to take care of themselves, or maybe not quite able to take care of themselves, and they just put them out in the street.

**LH:** And then they warehoused them in jails and prisons. And now that they got rid of cash bail in New York City, and they can no longer warehouse people, people are left to the streets. And everyone’s like, “Oh, what are we seeing here?” And I’m one of those people who say, yeah, it’s a lot to take in. Believe me, I worked with a population of people who are unhoused. It’s a lot to take in. And people are like, “Well, they’re using the bathroom on the platform.”

**LS:** Where else are they gonna use the bathroom, right?

**LH:** It’s the most unsanitary city and people blame the unhoused. If you’re worried about people using the bathroom publicly, then you should fight for more restrooms. If you’re worried about people being homeless on a platform, then fight for housing. And shelters are not housing. The shelter system is horrible in New York City. Absolutely deplorable. If you think they should just go to a shelter, then you go to the shelter and stay there a couple of nights. See how much you enjoy it. Just because a person is suffering from mental illness, that doesn’t mean they can’t tell when someone’s treating them badly.

So again, what are you really upset with here? What are you really upset about? These politicians like Landry can really turn this around and make it seem as if we need these things and what we really need is something for youth to do, somewhere for them to go, a society where they can feel that they’re a part of something.

**LS:** I just learned something on a Zoom call recently, in a discussion with young people. They said young people under 18 cannot go into some malls or supermarkets or stores anymore unless they have an adult with them. I was like, “What?” And then I went into a local mall and there were signs all over the place. You can’t be here without an adult. I’m like, you know, for a young person who doesn’t have a lot of resources, the store

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# Jena 6 legacy How mass protest turned

This December marks 18 years since the start of the case of the Jena 6, Robert Bailey, Mychal Bell, Carwin Jones, Bryant Purvis, Jesse Ray Beard, and Theo Shaw.

These six Black teenagers from the town of Jena, Louisiana, were initially charged with attempted second-degree murder of a white classmate after a series of white supremacist events at their high school. Following mass resistance, their charges were reduced to still-serious aggravated battery and conspiracy to commit aggravated battery.

Because of the racism on display in the operations of the legal system, this case sparked one of the biggest civil rights protest movements in the U.S. since the 1960s. Activists marched in cities across the country, including 60,000 in Jena itself.

This movement preceded Black Lives Matter by about six years and set the stage for much of the mass consciousness surrounding Black liberation, policing, and other issues in the period that followed it.

White supremacist groups marched in Jena but were outnumbered and drowned out by anti-racist activists, prefiguring the events in Charlottesville, North Carolina, in Aug. 2017, where white supremacists – emboldened by Trump's election – openly chanted Nazi slogans but were vastly outnumbered. Organized fight-back works.

The movement was ultimately successful in securing the freedom of the six. By 2009, Mychal Bell's conviction was overturned. Before a retrial in juvenile court, Bell pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of simple battery. The other five defendants later pleaded “no contest” to the same charge. Beyond the outcomes for these six young men, it is important to reckon with the legacy of the movement, especially in light of Trump's second election and the onslaught of racist attacks he vows to unleash.

For this reason, Struggle - La Lucha is republishing three 2007-08 articles on the Jena 6 Larry Hales, who was active in the Jena 6 movement. We are also publishing a recent interview with Hales conducted because of the anniversary, as well as an interview with Struggle - La Lucha's Lallan Schoenstein, who participated in the march in Jena.

In the following three pieces, Hales not only sums up the events in Jena but lays out the historical context of

**Supporters of the Jena 6 march in Jena, Louisiana, on Sept. 20, 2007.**



lynching and the deep relationship between Klan-type violence and capitalism. This is the kind of history that the right-wing is attempting to keep young people from learning. They would probably like the world to forget the Jena 6 and the mass movement behind them. We have to fight them.

## The Jena 6 and the right to self-defense

By Larry Hales, Sept. 24, 2007

***“I don’t favor violence. If we could bring about recognition and respect of our people by peaceful means, well and good. Everybody would like to reach his objectives peacefully. But I’m also a realist. The only people in this country who are asked to be nonviolent are Black people.”***

***“Nonviolence is only preached to Black Americans, and I don’t go along with anyone who wants to teach our people nonviolence until someone at the same time is teaching our enemy to be nonviolent. I believe we should protect ourselves by any means necessary when we are attacked by racists.”***

— Malcolm X, 1965

Surely no Black person, for that matter any oppressed person, considers the hanging of nooses a prank. Nor should any white person. Such a thing is never done in jest but is a threat of an intended action, a threat meant to control behavior or actions. It is a threat of an oppressor to keep the oppressed in line. The racists who hung the nooses were very clear on what they were doing.

Thousands of Black people have been lynched in this country, extra-legally and legally. There have been numerous studies of recorded lynchings of Black people, especially between 1865 and 1965. There are no really accurate numbers but most historians agree that these numbers range in the thousands,

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or the mall is a place where they can go to hang out and see their friends. It’s like a home. I think that’s a new thing that’s happening. We actually are trying to get this young person who’s talking about it to write about it. I had no idea, but now that somebody told me, I’m seeing it all over. It’s like, no, you can’t be here without an adult if you’re under 18. Have you seen that in Jersey?

**LH:** Yeah, in certain areas of Jersey. Whenever there’s something that happens with young people, it’s all over the news. They play it up. And then that was the atmosphere that led them to create these rules in certain malls.

**GEW:** There’s nowhere for them to go. If you hang out outside somewhere, you’re loitering. You’ve got to be somewhere spending money, but now you can’t go in the mall without an adult. #



# back white supremacists

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with the largest disproportionate number taking place in the South beginning with the end of Reconstruction.

The lynchings continued even after 1965. In 1981 19-year-old Michael Donald was lynched in Alabama. James Byrd was dragged to his death in 1998 in Texas; though he was not hanged with a rope, this is still considered a lynching.

So a noose is not a benign symbol.

The young Black students, now known as the Jena 6, who sat under the “White Students Only” tree, challenging a racist code at the high school in Jena, Louisiana, took a bold action. Their action is reminiscent of the actions taken by SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) and other groups at lunch counters during the Civil Rights era in the South.

When the oppressed resist or defend themselves, the state will seek to crush any inkling of resistance and defense before racist terror.

This is so because racism is a weapon of the U.S. capitalist rulers. The virulent ultra-right racists, such as the KKK or Nazi skinheads, are small. It may be difficult to ascertain their actual numbers, but relative to the actual number of people in the United States, their numbers are very small. Even the Minutemen, racists who have doffed their white robes and hoods, are small in number. They have attempted, but failed, to ally themselves with oppressed nationalities who are U.S. citizens against immigrant workers — to divide the unity of the oppressed.

But, as Sam Marcy, the late chairperson of Workers World Party, wrote in “The Klan & the Government: Foes or Allies”: “The financing and the spread of neo-fascist and downright KKK and Nazi groupings is a logical supplement to the legal repressive and terrorist apparatus of the capitalist state in times of need. For that reason, a short-lived perspective in fighting the fascist menace is erroneous.”

Movements don’t spring up spontaneously. Marcy also pointed out, “Capitalism is the fountainhead of political reaction in general and of KKK and neo-Nazi terror in particular.”

Reaction springs from the system itself. While ultra-right groupings may appear to be on the fringe and isolated, they never disappear and are never insignificant under capitalism. Groups like the Minutemen, in seething chauvinist fits, will try to appeal to the masses in an eco-

nomic downturn, such as is beginning now, but they exist to confuse workers in general, to divide the oppressed from one another, but ultimately to maintain the white supremacist-dominated U.S. capitalist system.

The events in Jena highlight perfectly the racism inherent and endemic to the system. Many have and will continue to try to minimize the impact of hanging nooses by labeling it as an isolated event or a prank.

Even in defense of the Jena 6, some may say, “It was just a school fight. Why the ridiculous charges against the six young Black men?”

However, it should be stated emphatically that what the Black youths did was self-defense and that it is the right of the oppressed to defend themselves.

## Demonization of Black youth

The state’s response is a symptom of the racist in-justice system. This can be seen in the criminalization of the poor, especially people of color. Black people make up half of the more than 2.2 million people incarcerated in U.S. prisons. Add the number of people in jails and on parole or awaiting trial, and the number is over 8 million.

Unemployment in the Black community has been consistently in the double digits and in major cities such as New York can be as high as 50% for young men in their twenties. The lack of health care, education, and other disparities are all glaring in the case of Black people in the U.S. and similar for all the oppressed.

Black people are vilified and Black men in particular are made society’s pariah. These are the conditions the Jena 6 — Robert Bailey Jr., 17; Theo Shaw, 17; Carwin Jones, 18; Bryant Purvis, 17; Jessie Rae Beard, 14; and Mychal Bell, 16 — lived with at the time of their arrest.

When the nooses were hung from the tree, history compounded with the nature of racism today. If Jena was and is not a racist place, as some white residents have claimed — all while avoiding the mass march that symbolized an up-

rising of Black people across the country in response to the Jena 6 case — then the students responsible would have been dealt with by the white residents in solidarity with the Black residents.

This, however, is not what happened. A series of events occurred, including the light treatment of the white students who hung the nooses; the threat by the district attorney to make the lives of the Black students disappear with the “stroke of his pen”; the beating of Robert Bailey; the pulling of a shotgun on Robert Bailey and two of his friends, and subsequent theft charges after the young men disarmed the white person.

Nothing was done. What were the young men to do in the wake of these attacks and threats? What was left to them in a small town that is more than 85% white?

When Justin Barker was attacked for jeering Robert Bailey and calling the young men the “n” word, the young men were standing up and defending their fellow students, themselves, and the entire Black community.

The response of the local state officials was an assertion that young Black men don’t have the right to self-defense — that they should cower and hide because the officials already showed they would not act to stop the racists.

The Jena 6 are heroes and should be held in that light, as history will attest. Their actions of defense were for the oppressed of Jena, for the people of New Orleans, victims of police brutality and racist terror. Their actions and the reaction of the state have awakened the Black masses and have sparked an emerging uprising across the country.

It is up to the anti-racist, anti-imperialist movement to lift up the Jena 6. Their freedom must be demanded. All charges should be dropped, and the D.A. should be stripped of his position and license to practice law. And the progressive and working-class movements should affirm and support the right of the oppressed to self-defense.

## Jena 6: Slap in the face as Bell sent back to jail

By Larry Hales, Oct. 17, 2007

Mychal Bell, one of the six young heroic Black men that resisted racism in the small town of Jena, Louisiana — located in a parish where arch-racist David Duke received the highest percentage of votes

when running for president — has been remanded back to jail.

The young men are now collectively known around the world as the Jena 6.

Bell, who spent 10 months in jail after a fight with a white student and had been

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Against fascism: reclaiming the legacy of **POPULISM** for today’s class struggle

## Protest turned back white supremacists

### Slap in the face as Bell sent back to jail *Continued from page 15*

convicted of attempted murder, although the white student received only a few lacerations, had his probation revoked for an old drug charge. The drug charge had never been tried.

His father said: "He's locked up again. No bail has been set or nothing. He's a young man who's been thrown in jail again and again, and he just has to take it."

This is obviously an attempt to demonize the young man, who went to the juve-

nile court thinking that he would have a hearing but instead had his probation revoked. This latest occurrence is a slap in the face. After more than 60,000 people marched on Jena and tens of thousands marched around the country, awakening the anger and frustration and a spirit of resistance in the Black masses, this can be seen as little else than an attempt to quell oppressed people.

The mass marches beat back the con-

viction on attempted murder charges, and the court had to throw it out and admit that Bell should not have been tried as an adult. The case, however, is far from over. Bell still faces a conviction for battery, and the five other young men still face trumped-up charges; two of them still must fight charges of attempted murder.

All the charges must be dropped. Though the House Judiciary Committee is slated to hear testimony from Rev. Al Sharpton on Oct. 16, the fight must be kept up. The case of the Jena 6 is a symptom of national oppression and the plight of Black people across the country.

## Movement to support Jena 6 confronted racism

By Larry Hales, Jan. 24, 2008

Jena, Louisiana, has not only become a symbol of the willingness of the state — the police, courts, and prisons — to crack down on self-defense from racist threats and attacks. Of late, it is also the latest city to be besieged by ultraright forces.

When the Nationalist Movement announced that it would march on Jena on Martin Luther King Jr. Day "to protest the holiday and the Jena 6," many saw the march's real intentions: to provoke fear in the Black inhabitants of the town and to attempt to use the scapegoating and criminalizing of the six young Black men who fought back against racism to the racists' advantage.

Already, the case of the young men had attracted international attention. Officials claim that Jena is a nice town and that people just want to be left alone. When Black students protested a "white students only" tree, however, school officials ignored their dissent, and the district attorney threatened the youth.

The six endured taunts, racial slurs, and an attack. Two young Black men had a shotgun pulled on them. Instead of charges against the bearer of the weapon, the young men were charged with theft of a weapon for disarming the person.

Nothing was done to address the rampant racism. The hanging of three nooses under the "white students only" tree led to light punishment and no criminal charges, though the hanging of nooses constitutes a viable threat and act of terror. When the men who came to be known as the Jena 6 defended themselves against a white youth who taunted them with racial slurs, they were charged with attempted murder.

The acts of the men and the reaction by city officials sparked a rebellion, as tens of thousands converged on the tiny

town of Jena and tens of thousands rallied around the country on Sept. 20, 2007.

Another rally in Washington, D.C., a few months later, drew more than 30,000 people, mostly Black. Many recognized the case as a matter of self-defense of the oppressed and the subsequent criminal charges as a reaction by the state meant to quell inklings of self-defense from the oppressed.

The town of Jena had another chance to redeem itself, to prove that it was not a racist town. The Nationalist Movement decided that not only would it march, displaying its vile, fascist tendencies, but that it would do so armed.

### Jena mayor praised ultrarightist

Jena's Mayor Murphy McMillin had met with Richard Barrett — spokesperson for the ultra-right Nationalist Movement — before the rally on Sept. 20 in support of the Jena 6. McMillin has never denied that he told Barrett, "I do appreciate what you are trying to do," and, "Your moral support means a lot." (Chicago Tribune, Sept. 24, 2007)

The action of McMillin and the district attorney, and many of the white residents of Jena is clear enough. Reed Walters, the district attorney, threatened to make the lives of the Black youth who complained about the "white students only" tree disappear with a stroke of his pen.

Justin Barker, the young white man who got beat up, was paraded around as a victim. He also would later try to mobilize white readers of a white supremacist website, according to the same Chicago Tribune article.

It is simple to understand the climate of a town like Jena, a town that is 86% white and voted overwhelmingly for racist David Duke when he ran for governor and for the Senate. The Barker family

even offered a place for Barrett to stay when he came to town before Sept. 20.

The march of the white supremacists turned out to be small, 15-30 people compared with over 150 counter-protesters organized by the Jan. 21st Committee and supported by many other groups, including the International Action Center and Fight Imperialism — Stand Together in solidarity with the Black inhabitants of Jena.

It is important in any period to drown out ultraright-wing racists and to shut down their message, no matter how small they seem. As Sam Marcy wrote in "The Klan & Government: Foes or Allies," "The U.S. working class should not fall prey to the deadly illusion that the reemergence of the Ku Klux Klan and the growth of fascist violence in widely separated areas of the country is a fleeting, momentary phenomenon, soon destined to sink into oblivion as conditions rapidly change."

The above was written during the right-wing Ronald Reagan administration, after the Klan marched on a number of cities, including Washington, D.C. — where they were soundly defeated and driven off by a counter-demonstration.

The analysis is critical because, all too often, there are attempts to paint outright fascist organizations and individuals as on the fringe. These violent, racist ultrarightists operate out in the open, and even during the most prosperous of times, they are always at least one weapon in the ruling class's arsenal aimed at smashing any movement for change emanating from workers and oppressed nationalities.

That the U.S. government, local and state governments allow and even appease organizations such as the Nationalist Movement, asserting the First Amendment as their rationale for granting permits and for providing police protection for the racists from the righteous indignation of counter-protesters, shows not only sheer hypocrisy but is a sign of complicity of the keepers of the status quo. #



# Jena showed necessity of class-conscious unity against racism

Against fascism: reclaiming the legacy of **POPULISM** for today's class struggle

*In 2006, Black teenagers from the town of Jena, Louisiana, were under white supremacist attacks at their high school. When some of the students defended themselves, they faced jail time.*

*The racism on display in this case sparked an enormous protest movement and the charges were reduced to misdemeanor battery.*

*Below is a recent interview with Lallan Schoenstein, who participated in the 2008 march in Jena against the Klan, on the legacy of Jena.*

*Schoenstein, who prepares the "Struggle for Socialism - La Lucha por el Socialismo" magazine for publication, is a labor union activist and retired child care worker. She's also a graphic designer who has worked on many books, including those for the Million Worker March Movement.*

**Gregory E. Williams:** Can you say a little bit about how you ended up traveling to Jena to support the six?

**Lallan Schoenstein:** For me, starting in the 1960s, the struggle against racism was powerful and created hope for a profound change. There was the Civil Rights Movement, the liberation struggles in Southern Africa as well as many anti-colonial victories. When the militant organization of the Black Panther Party faced crushing violence by forces of the state, it laid bare the role racism played in blocking social progress.

It could be seen that the driving forces of reaction in the capitalist system were the tactics of divide and conquer, of keeping society segregated by falsely blaming the most oppressed for the ever-present threat of joblessness, homelessness, and deprivation.

In 2006, the attack against Black high school students with a display of nooses in Jena, Louisiana, woke the whole country to the residual horrors of the slavocracy. There were protests in many cities. In September 2007, there was a huge march of African Americans in Jena while thousands across the country protested. It should have settled the issue. It didn't. Maybe the outrageously unjust legal accusations and threats of prison sentences on the courageous Jena 6 Black students were somewhat alleviated.

Then, in 2008, when the protests subsided, there was a backlash that arose



Protesters gather before a rally in Jena, Louisiana, in 2008.

SLL photo: Lallan Schoenstein

with the ugly face of the KKK. The white supremacists planned to march on Jan. 21 on a vulnerable Black community in a small rural town, purposefully desecrating Martin Luther King's birthday. They even won a lawsuit to march without a permit while carrying nooses, white cross flags, and even firearms.

**GEW:** What types of forces from the movement did you encounter?

**LS:** It felt crucial to join in with wonderfully diverse groups of students and union members who were organizing to gather in support of the action of anti-racist activists in Jena. We came from Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, New Orleans, Atlanta, Jersey City, New Jersey, and Durham, North Carolina to confront the Klan.

**GEW:** What was it like in Jena?

**LS:** At the rally, an ominous procession of big SUVs and police cars circled the local park. An organizer from Jena told us that "we have been harassed by the police, pulled over, and ticketed almost every day."

Following the rally, where Black liberation leaders, anti-police activists, and community organizers spoke, a group of over 150 of us marched from the park

to the courthouse where the white supremacists planned to hold their rally. Around 15 of them rapidly dissolved into a wall of police. Together, they attempted unsuccessfully to intimidate our march. We chanted: "No Nazis, No KKK, No Fascist USA!"

The people of Jena did not come out in support of the white supremacist rally. Instead, Black and white gathered along the route, many in solidarity with the anti-racist protest.

**GEW:** What is the significance of Jena?

**LS:** The events in Jena occurred in a rural part of the Deep South. Currently, it would appear that many areas like this are captured in a right-wing current. To think so would be to overlook the depth of complex social structures.

Racist bullies can whip up a superficial flood of malfeasance, especially when they are backed by the wealthiest bosses in whose interests they perform. No doubt they are dangerous. It's important to keep in mind that real social change can only come from the class struggle against oppression. Jena showed how class-conscious unity against racism was needed then and now more than ever. #

# From the Jena 6 to immigrant rights: Fight for others as you'd fight for yourself

*This December marks 18 years since the start of the Jena 6 case, in which six Black teenagers in Louisiana faced serious charges and prison sentences after they defended themselves from white supremacist threats at their high school.*

*The racism on display in this case sparked a civil rights protest movement.*

*Below is part four of an interview with Larry Hales, who participated in the Jena 6 solidarity movement.*

**Gregory E. Williams:** Is there anything you'd like to add before we wrap up?

**Larry Hales:** I left out something when I was talking about workers and families. Aside from that question, "What are you really upset about?" [editor's note: from earlier in the conversation, referring to anti-immigrant, anti-homeless sentiment, etc.] We need to realize that these things aren't happening in a vacuum. When we talk about conditions – or we're seeing a phenomenon that we're having a hard time understanding why it's happening or what the impact is going to be on us – these things did not come out of a vacuum. It's systemic. And I think people either don't know, or they haven't thought about it because there isn't enough time often. Or sometimes people just don't care and you can't always really do that much about that.

But my father, when he left and said to my mom, "I'm not coming back here," he meant because at that point in history, living in Mississippi was very stifling. This was at the end of the Great Migration, the last Great Migration. There were no opportunities, and you were taking your life in your hands even just going to a store. It felt unsafe to be in Mississippi and to be Black because you didn't know what somebody was going to do, how to respond, and you didn't know how you were going to make your livelihood. And opportunities were in the North to work in the factories.

One of the first books I read when I became a socialist was the "Blast Furnace Brothers" by Vince Copeland. And I used to give that book away as a gift to people. I said, whether you know a lot about politics or you know very little about politics, this is going to have a profound effect on you.

It's a story about when he was working with Black workers who wanted to be in the repair gang because all the Black



workers worked in the blast furnace. And the white workers who were in repair gangs did not want a Black person in the repair gang. In fact, Black people weren't allowed to be in a repair gang. And the person who I'm pretty sure was Vinnie supported that worker getting in a repair gang. And I think Vinnie was ultimately fired and there was a wildcat strike. And it wasn't expected that the Black workers would go on strike for a white worker, but they did. And they were just waiting for someone to tell them.

Part of the backdrop is that, because of the migration that was happening, the white workers in the factories were anxious that these Black workers from the South were taking something away from them. And I think a lot of people fed on that anxiety and it turned into something racist. But we can talk to that anxiety, and we can explain to people that this is happening for a reason. And when it comes to immigrant workers today, they're leaving their homes in large part because of what has been done to them by the U.S.

Not long ago, someone told me a very basic way to talk to workers about this. They said if you're concerned about losing your job because someone is forced and willing to take less, then you fight for that person to get as much as you can. Fight for them to have what you want for yourself. And once you do that, then the bosses have no one left to super-exploit. And that's why you fight for other oppressed workers. Because we want to create a world where you're not the next

target. I had left that out earlier, but I think it was important to say. That's part of that explanation for people who have a hard time understanding what's happening with immigrant workers, and they're turned against immigrant workers, and they start taking up these racist lines like they're eating your cats, and they're eating your geese, and stupid shit like that. It doesn't start at the nonsense about eating cats. It starts with the conditions created by capitalism. And we have to talk about those conditions created by capitalism, but also why people would risk everything to come into a country that has done so much harm to them.

**GEW:** Right, we can flip that script and explain to people that we have the same enemy at the end of the day. Whether we're born here or we're immigrants, our enemy is the same capitalist class – the same imperialist ruling class. In this country, it's the capitalists who are making it to where you can't find affordable housing. But they're also the ones that destroyed the economies of Honduras and Haiti and Venezuela. And that's why immigrants are coming here. So wouldn't it make more sense for us to join with them and fight the ones who are actually screwing us over?

**LH:** I try to engage with my daughters politically. You know, they're pro-Palestinian. One used to draw all these watermelons for Palestine. And I remember my other daughter said to me once after George Floyd was killed, "Daddy, are the cops going to kill you?" That was 2020, so she was like seven then.

**Lallan Schoenestein:** That must have been so terrifying for her. Yeah, and it's hard to answer the question. You don't want to lie. You don't want to tell the whole truth, either.

**LH:** I said something to the effect that we want a society where we don't have to worry about that. So she asked me, "Daddy, is race a real thing?" She's seven.

I said race changes. The whole idea that there's this thing of race that is always this, always this, I was like, that's not true. Irish people used to be thought of as a different race from the British. Italians used to be thought of as a different race from the so-called nativists in the United States.

*Continued on page 19*



# Trans rights activists hold sit-in at Capitol to protest Johnson's bathroom ban

Dozens of transgender activists and their allies demonstrated at the U.S. Capitol on Thursday, [Dec. 5] staging a sit-in inside a public restroom in defiance of a new policy enacted by Republican Speaker of the House Mike Johnson.

Johnson implemented the policy two weeks ago, preempting plans from Rep. Nancy Mace (R-South Carolina) to force a bill to the House floor to formally ban transgender people from using restrooms that correspond with their gender inside the Capitol building. Mace's planned bill was a direct attack on incoming Rep. Sarah McBride (D-Delaware), who is set to be the first openly trans lawmaker to serve in Congress.

McBride opposed the measure and the moves by Johnson, but chose not to focus on the issue, stating that she viewed the transphobic actions as a distraction.

"I'm not here to fight about bathrooms," she said in a statement.

McBride also derided Mace's attacks against her, saying at the time that it was proof that Republicans "have no real solutions to what Americans are facing."

"We should be focused on bringing down the cost of housing, health care, and child care, not manufacturing culture wars," she said.

The act of civil disobedience on Thursday was organized by the Gender Liberation Movement (GLM) and took place in a restroom near Johnson's office. Protesters, including transgender advocate Chelsea Manning, directed their action not only at Republicans, but also Democrats, condemning the party for not doing enough to defend McBride's rights.



Pro-transgender rights activists with the Gender Liberation Movement protest in the House Cannon building and face subsequent arrests on December 5, 2024, in Washington, D.C.

"Speaker Johnson, Nancy Mace, our genders are no debate!" one chant from the demonstrators stated.

"Democrats, grow a spine, trans lives are on the line!" another chant asserted.

<https://x.com/AnnaLissRoy/status/1864748640436162561>[embedpress]

Mace responded to the action by posting a video of herself on social media in which she used a slur against transgender people to describe the protesters.

Multiple studies show that Mace, who claims that cisgender women's safety is at risk if transgender women are allowed to use the same restrooms, is wrong in her bigoted assessments — indeed, a study from UCLA found that there is no evidence of any adverse effects of trans-inclusive policies in public restrooms.

Around 15 individuals were arrested

for the protest. They were arrested not because they violated the restroom policy, but because of a Washington, D.C. ordinance against "crowding, obstructing or incommoding," according to reporting from Axios.

GLM co-founder Raquel Willis issued a statement regarding the demonstration, noting that transphobic fearmongering and attacks on trans people at the Capitol came following "nearly \$200 million of attack ads [that] were disseminated across the United States" during the 2024 campaign.

"Everyone deserves to use the restroom without fear of discrimination or violence. Trans folks are no different," Willis said. "We deserve dignity and respect and we will fight until we get it."

Source: Truthout

## From the Jena 6 to immigrant rights

*Continued from page 18*

I was like, so it's not a real thing, it shifts and changes based on what people in power need it to be. As for our idea of race and the Black race, I was like, there was a little event called Bacon's Rebellion a long time ago. [a 1676-77 armed rebellion in the Virginia colony] There were white indentured servants, which is a form of slavery where people sell themselves for passage to the colony. And there were Black people who were captured. And there was a commonality in

that shared circumstance.

And that ended at a certain point, and then race became a thing that was written into law. Not necessarily as in Black and white, but the fact that if you were Black and you were born into slavery, you would exist in slavery. And there was no way to get out of it. There was no period of time in which you ceased to be a slave like there were for indentured servants. You were just a slave. You were enslaved, I should say, not a slave. So I said to my daughter, we want to fight for a world

where there's no idea of a white person, of whiteness. I was like, and Blackness is the opposite of whiteness and how race is viewed in our society.

And the pride that we hold in Blackness is different from the pride that a white person holds in whiteness. That pride in whiteness is a pride in what your whiteness gets you. The pride in Blackness is a pride in the resistance of that Blackness and the struggle against whiteness. I said eventually they will both cease to exist. It's not real and at the same time it is real. It's only real because of history, but it's not scientific otherwise. #



Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) fighters train in Idlib Province, Syria. In 2018, the U.S. State Department designated HTS as a terrorist organization and al-Qaida. Today Washington says the organization is bringing "democracy" to Syria.

# SYRIA:

## U.S., Israel, & Turkey behind terrorist takeover

By Lev Koufax

Both corporate Western media and so-called progressive media have been positively giddy with celebration in the wake of the U.S. and Turkish-backed terrorist takeover of what was formerly the Syrian Arab Republic.

Articles and statements have flooded different outlets and social media profiles with statements congratulating the Syrian people on their victory over the "dictator" Bashar Al-Assad. According to these news corporations and non-profit organizations, Syria will now finally be "free."

These assertions are strange in the face of current events that are actively playing out in Syria. Since the Syrian Arab Republic officially fell and former President Assad fled on Dec. 9, the country has further devolved into chaos and fire.

Immediately after Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) troops entered Damascus, Zionist occupation forces unleashed the largest offensive in their history. Syria was the target of that offensive. Zionist air forces and artillery struck Syria 480 times in less than 48 hours, destroying

the entire Syrian military and navy. The Zionists faced no opposition from HTS forces.

Compounding the crisis, HTS and their allies have unleashed a bloody campaign against Syria's religious and ethnic minorities. Fearing for their lives, thousands of Shia Alewives, Syrian Christians, and Syrian Kurds have fled towards the Lebanese border seeking refuge. This refugee crisis mounts as reports across Syria confirm that HTS is summarily executing members of various ethnic and religious minority communities, as well as anyone associated with the Syrian Arab Army. No trials. No due process. Just blood.

This is supposedly the freedom Syria now has due to the fall of the Syrian Arab Republic and its longtime leader, Bashar Al-Assad.

All of this destruction and violence, which clearly benefits the U.S. and Israel, is supposedly justified because Assad was a "Dictator" and a "Tyrant." The justification of imperialist regime change through allegations of dictatorship and tyranny is not new.

In 1990, Marxist analyst Sam Marcy

wrote an article observing that these sorts of allegations were classic imperialist tactics aimed at breaking movements that would resist the U.S. military. In this article, named "A new turn in the world struggle: U.S. intervention in the Middle East," Marcy said:

"Vilification of Third World leaders opposed to U.S. intervention in their respective countries is not a new phenomenon in U.S. politics. But it reaches absolutely absurd heights when it comes to the Arab people.

"In the contemporary era, Col. Muammar Qaddafi of Libya and Saddam Hussein of Iraq have shared the kind of vilification that Nasser experienced. At present, the imperialist press, especially in the U.S., seems to have pulled out all stops in slander, deceit and vilification in the case of Saddam Hussein – criminal, terrorist, bum, tyrant, madman, etc., etc. ad nauseam."

Marcy goes on to point out the hypocrisy of the United States claiming the moral high ground in any situation on issues of human rights and territorial expansion. As Marcy notes, the entirety of the

*Continued on page 21*



# SYRIA

Continued from page 20

United States was built on the genocide of Indigenous peoples.

Nonetheless, Marcy notes several examples of how U.S. propaganda is used to undermine any leader in the Global South who would dare to resist their influence or their military sphere of control.

Just like with Saddam Hussein, the U.S. imperialist propaganda machine has churned for over a decade using any social problem inherent in a capitalist society like Syria as evidence that Bashar Al-Assad was a “criminal, terrorist, bum, tyrant madman, etc. etc. ad nauseam.” This is a tactic the imperialists use again and again to justify the destruction of entire societies, from Iraq to Libya and now to Syria. All of this is with the aim of imperialist expansion throughout the Middle East and crushing any remaining resistance.

In the same article, Marcy prognosticated what is now unfolding across the Middle East,

“The Arab people are not the only ones menaced by imperialism in the Middle East. The effort of the U.S. to make the Mediterranean Sea a U.S. lake has put the Middle East in danger of military intervention for many years now. No country there is safe. Few are free either from U.S. domination or its terror.

“The first duty of the progressive and working-class movement in the U.S. is to call for immediate withdrawal of U.S. warships, troops and planes from the entire Middle East area. As has been pointed out again and again, the terms of the NATO treaty are supposed to be effective only for the North Atlantic states in the North Atlantic. Europeans and the U.S. have no business under that treaty of even being in the Mediterranean.”

Not only has Marcy’s observation regarding U.S. military policy borne out in exponential horror since these words were written, but his call to the progressive and working-class movement is more important than ever.

In the 34 years since Marcy wrote his article, the U.S. invaded Iraq, NATO bombing assisted a terrorist takeover of Libya, and now a U.S.-enabled terrorist takeover has plunged Syria into darkness.

Now, more than ever, the entire movement needs to heed Marcy’s words and see the fall of Syria for what it truly is: another U.S. imperialist hostile takeover of a country that would dare resist its grasp of exploitation. #

# Class hatred erupts Killing CEO highlights health care injustice

Continued from page 1

by the Yale School of Public Health and other groups found that universal health care in the U.S. would have saved 212,000 lives and \$459 billion in 2020 when COVID-19 was raging. Insurance companies that lobby against universal health care know very well that this system kills hundreds of thousands of people every year. All the executives have blood on their hands.

Insurance companies (not to mention private hospital shareholders) are out to make money, first and foremost, not provide care. They make their money by fleecing workers already squeezed by high housing costs and low wages.

Speaking of the pandemic, that experience showed that workers, not CEOs, are essential, including in health care. What could possibly justify the bloated salaries and bonuses of people like Thompson?

Not surprisingly, politicians have been weighing in to defend CEOs. Kamala Harris’ running mate, Tim Walz – who is governor of the state where UnitedHealthcare is headquartered – called the shooting of Thompson “horrific news and a terrible loss for the business and health care community.”

Apparently, this killing is beyond the pale for Walz, even though Kamala Harris, as part of the Biden administration, is complicit in the murder of tens of thousands of people in Gaza, many of whom are children. Where’s Walz’s outrage about kids slowly starved to death or burned alive? For the Democratic Party’s leadership, ruthless CEOs’ lives matter, but not those of innocent children.

Working people seem to feel differently. It is not just the “radical left” who agreed that the corporate parasite was running a criminal operation, putting profits before people, not to be mourned. Many moderately progressive people have joined in, as well as ordinary people on the right, much to the chagrin of the pundits.

Right-wing influencers Ben Shapiro and Matt Walsh have faced backlash from their followers after condemning the “radical left” for not denouncing the killing of Thompson. As Newsweek reported, “Their followers disagreed with their criticisms and defended the left, arguing that they felt the same way about Thompson’s death and bashing Shapiro and Walsh for being ‘out of touch’ as wealthy media personalities.”

Here are a few comments quoted in the Newsweek article:

“I’m a Republican. I voted for Trump. I am unsubscribing from Ben. They are not like us.”

“Ben’s net worth is around \$50,000,000.000. He is a peer of Brian Thompson not one of us, the average American citizen.”

“[Shapiro is making] money by generating hate and division.”

This goes to show that even working-class people who have been taken in by the lies of rich scam artists like Trump are capable of realizing where their true interests lie, and it’s not with the rich.

If Shapiro and Walsh are misleading people about CEOs, isn’t it possible that they’re lying about immigrants and trans people? Isn’t it possible that they’re lying about climate change and the evils of socialism?

And what about Donald Trump? Isn’t he like Brian Thompson? He’s what Gen Z calls a “nepo baby,” a nepotism baby who comes from generational wealth. He inherited wealth from his father, Fred Trump, a New York City real estate gangster. Now, he has the world’s richest man, Elon Musk, at his right hand and a cabinet of billionaires. As of Dec. 10, the total net worth of the billionaires in the Trump administration equals at least \$382.2 billion – which is more than the GDP of 172 different countries.

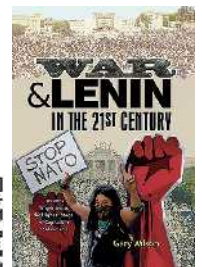
Isn’t it possible that Trump is not really interested in combating elites but instead wants to give those elites more wealth and power? Just food for thought. #

## WAR & LENIN in the 21st Century

Lenin’s pamphlet on Imperialism is included in Gary Wilson’s book.

Vladimir Lenin, the revolutionary leader of the Soviet Union and a key contributor to Marxist theory, wrote “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” in 1916. It remains an influential critique of imperialism. As in Lenin’s time, the conclusion is that socialist revolution will end imperialist war, enabling workers to meet their own needs.

Paperback or kindle at [tinyurl.com/LeninAndWar](https://tinyurl.com/LeninAndWar)



# Thousands march in NYC for Palestine on International Day of Solidarity

SLL photo: Stephen Millies

## Struggle - La Lucha New York

New York, Nov. 29 — Thousands of people took to the streets of Midtown Manhattan today to demand an end to the genocide in Gaza, West Bank, and Lebanon by the U.S. and its Zionist killers. The militant action was called by Shut It Down 4 Palestine.

People gathered at Columbus Circle in front of Deutsche Bank's 750-foot-high skyscraper. Germany's biggest financial octopus, with over \$1.5 trillion in assets, which had helped Hitler to come to power, financed Trump's shady business operations to the tune of hundreds of millions. So naturally these banksters also have an office in Zionist occupied Palestine.

Speakers at the opening rally included Taher Dahleh and Ibtihal Malley from the Palestinian Youth Movement; Manolo De Los Santos, from The People's Forum; and Roger Wareham, from the December 12th Movement.

People marched across 59th Street past luxury hotels and condos before going down Fifth Avenue. Chants of "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!" echoed off Tiffany's, Trump Tower, Rockefeller Center, and dozens of expensive boutiques.

Onlookers on the street were friendly and supportive. Many took photos of the signs and banners carried by demonstrators.



Marchers ended up at Herald Square in front of Macy's biggest department store where a spirited rally was held. Protesters listened to a live report from a journalist in Gaza describing the suffering the U.S. and Israel are inflicting on the people there.

In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly declared Nov. 29 the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. On that date in 1947, Palestine was divided with Zionist settlers stealing Palestinian land just as other colonial settlers stole African lands in Kenya and Zimbabwe.

It was President Harry "Hiroshima" Truman, whose career as a politician started in 1922 when he joined the Missouri Ku Klux Klan, who forced this bloody partition through the UN.

It's fitting that Henry Kissinger finally croaked last year on Nov. 29.

Every child murdered in Palestine and Lebanon by U.S.-made bombs dropped by U.S.-made planes is worth infinitely more than that bloody war criminal.

The struggle for liberation will continue no matter who is in the White House. Palestine and Lebanon will win! #

# U.S. War Drive Against China book launch

Nov. 23, Los Angeles – The Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice launched the book "The U.S. War Drive against China."

The book features articles from Struggle-La Lucha. The writers and a labor leader from Nigeria attended the meeting.

Writing contributors Sharon Black, Scott Scheffer, Apryle Everly, and John Parker discussed the implications of the U.S. war drive against China for the lives of working people around the world.

Scott Scheffer talked about the numerous contributions of China in fighting climate change.

Sharon Black exposed how the austerity and wars of the U.S. directly target the livelihoods of working people in the U.S. and abroad.

Writer and youth organizer Apryle Everly from Baltimore touched on the opportunities China provided in addition to the study abroad programs.

Featured guest Owei Lakemfa, a labor union national leader and coordinator of the International Decolonization conference in Nigeria spoke about the implications of the IMF and

World Bank directly affecting the youth who were targeted for simply protesting against the IMF's austerity measures in Nigeria.

John Parker welcomed the well-attended meeting participants to the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice. Parker focused on the opportunities provided by China's Belt and Road projects, especially in Africa, which went contrary to the IMF and World Bank's negative effects on developing infrastructure on the continent.

Black, Everly, Scheffer, and Parker are all members of the Socialist Unity Party and contributors to the Struggle-La Lucha magazine. #



[tinyurl.com/USWarChina](http://tinyurl.com/USWarChina)



# Born Jewish in Nazi Europe: My Journey to Become Anti-Zionist

By Lev Koufax

The term “holocaust survivor” usually renders a specific type of image in one’s mind. It’s easy to picture an ancient Bubbe or Zayde (Yiddish for “Grandmother” and “Grandfather”) trembling over a walker at the front of a synagogue, discussing the importance of “Israel” to ensuring Jewish safety.

That description certainly does not apply to Suzanne Ross, the author of “Born Jewish in Nazi Europe: My Journey to Become Anti-Zionist.” Ross was born in Nazi-occupied Belgium in the late 1930s. Ironically, her family fled to Belgium due to Nazi oppression in Germany and Poland. Turns out, nowhere in Europe was remotely safe for Jews at the time.

The book details her family’s early days fleeing Nazi persecution and how that experience shaped her views on the occupation of Palestine. Most of her extended family on both her mother’s and father’s side were not so lucky. Upwards of 30 members of her family were murdered outright by Nazi terror or died in concentration camps. As she describes, it was this sort of trauma that allowed U.S.-backed Zionist propaganda to take such a hold in the recently displaced European Jewish community.

What is striking about Ross’s experience as a child, experiencing the loss of so many family members, is how similar her story is to the hundreds and thousands of horror stories that come out of Gaza every week. It is exactly this sort of stark parallel that led Ross herself to abandon Zionism as an ideology and embrace the liberation of Palestine from Western imperialism.

As history unfolded, Ross’ views evolved dramatically along with the Zionist escalation against the entire Arab world. Ross attended university in the United States and quickly became involved in activism against

racist Jim Crow conditions in the U.S. and apartheid in South Africa. The late ‘60s and early ‘70s saw a massive upsurge in aggression from the United States towards Arab liberation movements, all through the U.S. proxy state of “Israel.”

Ross’s memoir does an amazing job of analyzing how the contradictions between her growing anti-racist activism and her previous support for Israel led her to the conclusion that the two could not be reconciled. Simply put, either we are against all forms of imperialism and fascism, the same systems that perpetrated the Holocaust, or we aren’t.

While Gaza burns and Zionist forces lay claim to what they assert as their divine right to conquer Syria, Ross’s perspective is more important than ever. At its heart, Ross’s memoir is an ironclad case against Zionist mythology. Through the history of her life and the global geopolitical events that defined her life, she

makes it abundantly clear that the Zionist project is no more than a U.S. imperialist front against the entire Global South. And that is exactly why her book is a must read.

## Personal note

I usually don’t write in the first person. But after finishing Ross’ book and starting this review, I felt the need to say something on a personal level. Her evolution from a liberal Zionist to a passionate anti-Zionist activist is personally relatable. I am descended from people who faced the brunt of both Tsarist antisemitic pogroms in the Russian empire and the horror of the Shoah (Hebrew word for holocaust). I personally stood in Charlottesville as Nazis streamed past and around me, stuffed to the gills with body armor and carrying swastika-laden banners. However, Jews have a responsibility to stand up to all Nazis, regardless of whether they fly the confederate flag or the Star of David.

As I have grown older, I have only found more stunning the way that Jewish Zionists justify the genocide against the Palestinian people. As Ross details – the parallels are so clear. The connections are so patent. The catastrophic loss of life, limb, and land at the hands of a fascist enemy is no stranger to the Jewish community. Unfortunately, we allowed ourselves to be led into the depths of fascism by the United States in the dogged pursuit of its own agenda in the Middle East.

With all that said, it was beyond refreshing to read a Jewish perspective for liberation. I will always be eternally grateful that Suzanne had the courage to tell her story. It was something that a young Jew like myself needed to hear.

*Lev Koufax is an anti-Zionist Jewish activist.*

Join author and several honored guests in dialogue:

## Born Jewish in Nazi Europe my journey to become ANTI-ZIONIST

Hear from:

**Dr. Suzanne Ross** Author

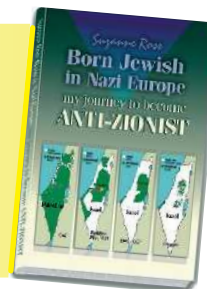
**Layan Fuleihan** Sponsor, The People’s Forum

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Questions



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# Vistas de transición de la corrupción

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Las pasadas elecciones para la gobernanación en Puerto Rico fueron una colección de anuncios y propagandas asquerosamente mentirosas para que el partido en el gobierno, el Partido Nuevo Progresista, corrupto y criminal, pudiera seguir robándole al pueblo cuatro años más.

Y estas semanas, toca una segunda fase de propaganda.

Esta vez, a través de las susodichas "Vistas de transición" que se transmiten por la mayoría de los medios locales. Supuestamente, estas vistas facilitan el paso de una administración a otra, exponiendo los logros y las fallas del gobierno para que la nueva administración tome nota y pueda corregir los defectos. Perfecto, diríamos. Porque si cada cuatro años se dan estas vistas, tendríamos un gobierno eficaz que administre para el bien común del pueblo.

Pero todo lo contrario. Cada vez más, con cada nueva administración, se profundizan los robos, y el maltrato del pueblo. Los llamados Comités de Transición, van exponiendo como baile macabro sobre escenarios nauseabundos, los grandes despojos que poco a poco van haciendo a la ciudadanía, a través de los portavoces de los diferentes departamentos gubernamentales de Salud, Vivienda, Economía, Seguridad y Educación, entre otros.



Pero también nos dan la oportunidad de saber los detalles que por años ocultaban.

Un ejemplo puntual, es en el tema de Educación. Una base tan fundamental para el desarrollo de un país, lo que estos pasados gobiernos, a pedido del imperialismo estadounidense, ha hecho, ha sido destruir el futuro de nuestra juventud, y por ende, de nuestro pueblo. Ha cerrado la mitad de las escuelas públicas, ha utilizado su presupuesto, que es el mayor de todas las agencias gubernamentales, para crear puestos que premien a personas incompetentes pero leales a su

partido. Con ese botarate de dinero, han dejado al estudiantado y sus maestras y maestros, sin recursos y materiales educativos. Muchas veces, es el magisterio y los padres y madres quienes compran útiles de limpieza y pintura para mantener limpias sus escuelas.

Pero estas vistas de Transición servirán para armarnos de más razones con las que combatiremos esta nueva administración y al final poner fin al colonialismo que nos ahoga.

Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les habló Berta Joubert-Ceci.



## Korean community in U.S. stands up against martial law

By Struggle-La Lucha Los Angeles

In nearly back-to-back rallies, the Los Angeles Korean community turned out to protest the decree of martial law by White House-backed South Korean president Yoon Suk Yeol. Nodutol, the youth activist organization based in the Korean diaspora in the U.S., held an emergency rally on Dec. 4 at the South Korean Consulate. Rallies were also held in the Bay Area and in New York City.

The U.S. representatives of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions held a second rally at the Consulate on Dec. 7, calling for a general strike until Yoon steps down.



A crowd gathered in Los Angeles at a Korean community-led protest against martial law.

SLL photos

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